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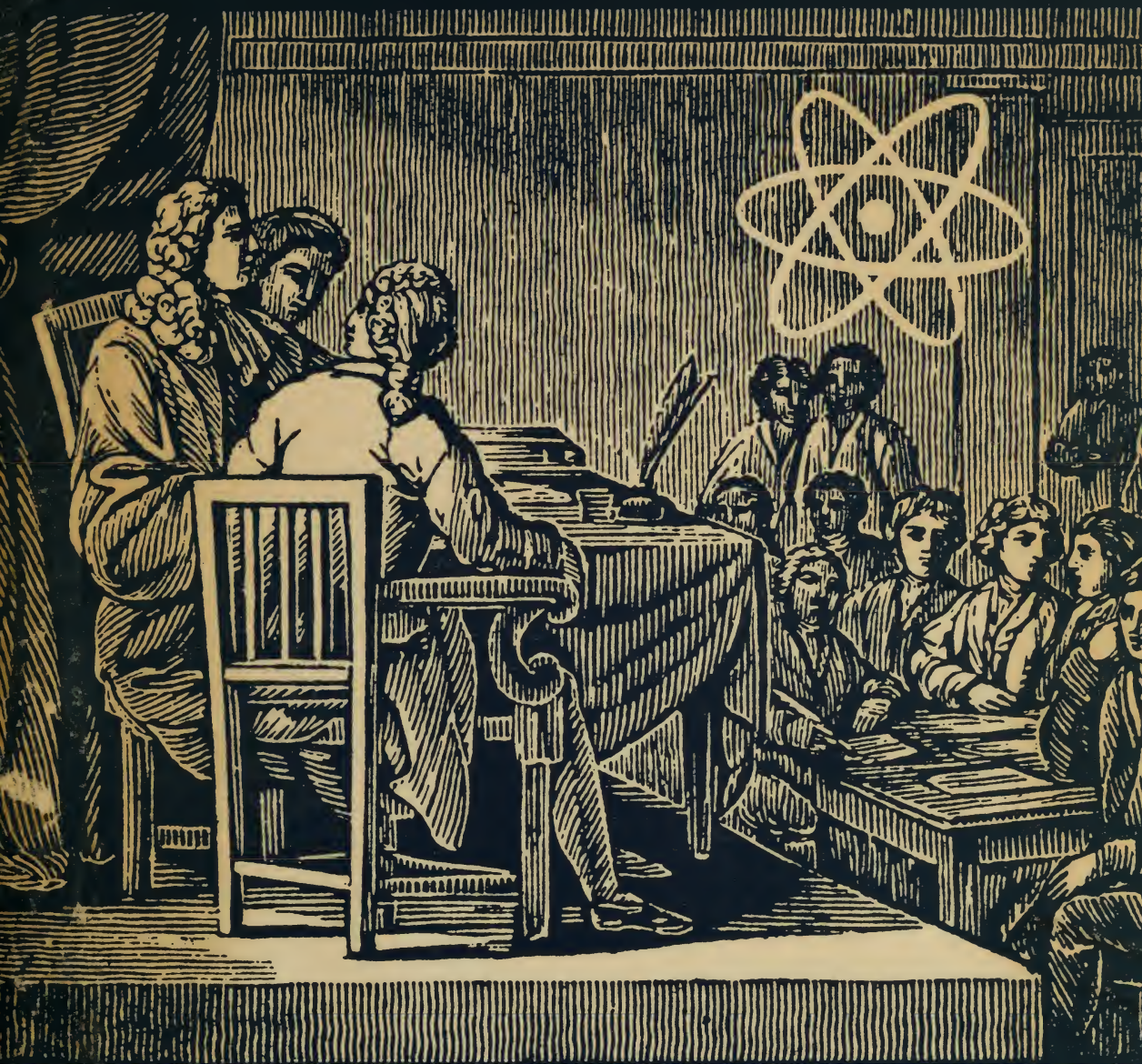


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Government Pattern, *Connecticut Style*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT

720 Main Street

Hartford 3, Connecticut

Government pattern, Connecticut style
—a non-partisan organization established in 1921
to encourage informed and active participation
of citizens in government.

This pamphlet is published as a public service
for the citizens of Connecticut, in the hope that it will
give them a clearer picture of the development of
Connecticut's pattern of government.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut gratefully
acknowledges the contributions of:

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Fifteen cents

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November, 1949

GOVERNMENT PATTERN, CONNECTICUT STYLE

PATTERN SHOULD FIT AND SUIT

Every woman who sews understands that she must "suit the pattern to the cloth." But, if she is a successful seamstress, she also realizes that she must suit the garment to the occasion and the design to the times.

The citizen might fare better if politicians followed these same rules in shaping the patterns of government. Does Connecticut's pattern need a new design? The fabric of the state, once rural and agricultural, is now largely urban and industrial. But her pattern of government has remained practically unchanged since 1818. It has been altered in spots, decorated in others. But does it fit our needs today, or should it be re-designed to suit the times?

THE FIRST PATTERN

The colonists of Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor set up the first Connecticut pattern of government in 1639 under the Fundamental Orders, the first written plan of self-government in history. The design consisted of an assembly of 19 members: seven magistrates elected by plurality vote of freemen who were determined by property qualifications; and four deputies from each of the three towns. This assembly had legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The magistrate with the most "papers" (votes) became governor; but the governor and his assistants (magistrates) were definitely subservient to the will of the assembly as a whole.

The pattern remained basically unchanged under the charter granted to the Connecticut Colony in 1662 by King Charles II of England. A union between state and church was woven into the design and all of the citizens were henceforth taxed for the support of the Congregational Church. The Assembly continued to be the governing body. The number of magistrates was increased to 14 (including the governor and his assistant), and, since there were now 17 towns, each town was allowed only two representatives. It was implied but not specifically stated that the governor was to be elected by a majority (more than half of the votes) rather than by the earlier plurality (more votes than for any other candidate).

This provision was confirmed by statute in 1742. A court system was established in 1666 which put some limitations on the judicial powers of the Assembly.

In 1698 the Assembly was divided into two houses, one consisting of the magistrates, the other of representatives from the towns, both bodies to assent on all legislation. In 1707 a law was passed allowing the governor (previously one of the magistrates) to be specifically elected by the people.

The American Revolution brought no immediate change in Connecticut's pattern of government. When the Assembly met in 1776 it confirmed the Declaration of Independence and struck out of the Charter all references of subservience to the British crown. Then in 1784 it adopted the Charter as a civil constitution.

A NEW PATTERN

During this period many citizens had grown dissatisfied with the pattern of government. They felt that the Charter was not a constitution since it was a grant of authority from a ruler and not a contract between the people and their government. Specifically they disliked the concentration of legislative, executive, and judicial powers in one body. They objected to a suffrage based on property qualifications. They resented most the close union between the state and the Congregational Church.

Finally in 1818 the Federalist Party was defeated by a union of Jeffersonian Republicans and non-Congregationalists. A constitutional convention was called, a constitution was drafted, and later ratified by popular vote. Under the new constitution the close relationship between state and church was uprooted. The executive branch of the government was separated from the legislative, but the executive remained weak in power. The Senate, consisting of 12 members continued to be elected at large, and the system of representation in the lower house remained the same, two representatives from each town. New towns, however, were to have only one representative. If towns were divided there could be no change in representation from the parent town without its consent. There was little dissatisfaction with this system of representation at that time because the state was largely rural and agricultural. The largest town was New Haven with a population of 8,327.

ALTERATIONS

These minor changes, however, did not keep pace with the rapid economic and social changes which took place in the 19th century. Rocky soil and Yankee ingenuity combined to change Connecticut's economy. The younger generation, discouraged by the poor farming conditions in rural Connecticut, left the farms to work in the factories which were being established in the state. The opening up of western lands further depleted the population of the rural areas. These changes had political repercussions. The small towns decreased in size and cities developed around the new industries. The citizens in the heavily populated areas began to feel that they no longer had a fair share of representation in the Assembly.

The pattern of the Senate was changed in 1828. Instead of being elected at large the Senators were henceforth elected by districts¹. There were to be not less than 18 and not more than 24 districts, as equal in population as possible.

But representation in the lower house continued to be a cause for complaint. Year after year, in 1848, 1849, 1855, 1867, 1873, and 1875, attempts were made to call a constitutional convention to change the system. The bills would pass in one session of the legislature, but they would be defeated in the second session when a two-thirds vote of both houses was required for passage. Finally two constitutional amendments were adopted. The first, in 1874², gave all towns over 5000 two representatives. The second, in 1876³, stated that new towns must have a population of 2500 before they could have a representative, and that parent towns must attain that same population before a division of representation could be made. But all towns established before 1818 continued to have two representatives regardless of their size.

THE PATTERN AND POLITICAL PARTIES

The problem did not become a party issue until 1890. Before that date it was a battle between urban and rural interests. However, the Republican leaders came to realize that the existing system gave them virtual control over the General Assembly. Their strength was concentrated in the small towns and a change in the system of representation could easily destroy their control. By

1. Amendments I, II, and III.

2. Amendment XV.

3. Amendment XVIII.

the same token the Democrats realized that they could never control the legislature unless the method of representation was changed.

A political crisis in 1890 crystalized the issue. In that year Frank Morris, the Democratic candidate for governor, won the election by a majority of only twenty-five votes. The Republican lower house claimed election fraud and wanted a recount of the votes. The Democratic Senate refused to concur. The case went to the Supreme Court for a decision. The court ruled that no candidate had been elected. Therefore, the incumbent governor, Morgan Bulkeley, remained in office until 1893. No legislation was passed during that period, not even a budget. The government was financed in that biennium by loans personally guaranteed by Bulkeley. Politics had reached a new low in the minds of the public. They demanded some reform.

As a result, in 1893, the Republican House passed two bills for constitutional amendments, one to change the method of electing the governor and the second to redistrict the Senate. These bills earned the name of the "Lost Amendments" because the party repudiated its stand in the 1895 session.

However, because of persistent public pressure for reform both amendments were finally adopted in 1901. Article XXX made the governor's election by plurality instead of majority vote. Article XXXI called for a redistricting of the Senate. Starting with the 1905 session of the General Assembly, there were to be no less than 24 and no more than 36 districts. There had to be at least one senator from each county, and no district could divide any town unless the division created a district within the town itself. This amendment further stipulated that the Senate should be redistricted after each federal census.

A NEW PATTERN IS REJECTED

The House of Representatives, however, refused to initiate a bill to change the representation in the lower house. As a result the Committee on constitutional amendments brought out a bill calling for a constitutional convention. This bill was passed and was submitted to the voters who ratified the convention call.

The Convention (one delegate from each town) met in January, 1902, and was in session for six months. There were two factions among the delegates. One group favored enlarging the

Senate to 60 members and limiting the representation in the lower house to one delegate from each town. The other favored putting representation in the lower house on a population basis.

Agreement was finally reached. The convention voted to enlarge the Senate to 45 members, and to put representation in the lower house on a population basis thus:

Towns 2000 and under	1 representative
Towns 2000 to 50,000	2 representatives
Towns 50,000 to 100,000	3 representatives
Towns over 100,000	4 representatives
Each additional 50,000 of population	1 additional representative

The revised constitution, including this plan of representation and some minor changes, suffered overwhelming defeat when it was submitted to the voters for ratification. 75,000 voters had exercised their franchise in voting for a convention but only about 31,000 voted on the revised constitution. The delegates had spent six months of intense and serious work in drafting a new pattern. Apparently they did not resent the rejection of their pattern nearly as much as they must have resented the apathy of the people in failing to register a large vote on the vital issue of a new constitution.

COMMISSIONS STUDY CONNECTICUT'S PATTERN

Since 1902 there has been no major attempt to change the system of representation. Many commissions have been appointed to study special areas of state government and their recommendations have brought some changes in pattern. In 1915, during a period when there was nation-wide interest in government reform, a commission was appointed to study especially the Health Department and state inspection activities. This body enunciated the beginnings of reform in administrative financial management, but few of its recommendations were adopted at that time.

Again in 1935 the General Assembly empowered Governor Wilbur Cross to appoint a commission to study the reorganization of state government. This commission confined its study to the executive branch of the government, feeling that the matter of representation was so controversial a subject that recommendations

here might defeat any other reforms it might propose. The Cross Commission made a very thorough study of the executive branch and published a long and detailed report of its findings, with many recommendations for change.

Some of its recommendations were adopted, particularly those dealing with fiscal policy. A Department of Finance and Control was established with personnel, tax, and central purchasing divisions, which was responsible directly to the governor. This major improvement, however, was weakened somewhat in 1943 when the Finance Advisory Committee was reinstated, thus decreasing the governor's direct responsibility for fiscal policy and operation.

The legislature in 1949 approved the appointment of a new commission to study the organization of state government. Governor Bowles has appointed a five-man commission which is now engaged in a detailed study of Connecticut's pattern of government. This commission is planning to cover a larger field than the Cross Commission, to include a study of the courts, and some research into the legislative branch. This research may bring forth recommendations on the controversial subject of representation.

The report of this latest commission is due in January, 1950. We, as citizens, should prepare for that report. We should know where Connecticut's pattern of government does not fit our present-day needs, and what changes need to be made in its design to give us a government which is efficient, economical, and suited to the times.

WHY CHANGE THE STYLE?

We can get some background of information from the "Report of the Connecticut Commission Concerning the Reorganization of State Departments" (The Cross Commission), published in 1937. That report reveals an astounding picture of a haphazard pattern of government without clear lines of authority and responsibility. Government services had been expanding steadily for more than a hundred years, and each new service was added like a button or bow and was never fitted into the government pattern.

In 1818, when the Constitution was adopted, there were only five agencies in the state government and the state spent only a few thousand dollars. In 1850, there were only ten departments

and the costs were \$110,000. By 1900 there were 42 departments and agencies and expenses were \$1,643,000. In 1927 there were 67 agencies and the cost of state government had reached \$30 millions. In 1935 there were 160 agencies in the state government, 132 in the executive branch alone, and the year's budget totaled \$45 millions.

There were single administrators, boards, and commissions, combinations of administrators, boards, and commissions. There were only six elected officers in the executive branch, but there was no pattern for the hundreds of appointments to be made in the network of agencies. Some were made by the governor alone, some by the governor with the consent of the Senate, some with the consent of the General Assembly, some with the consent of special agencies, and still other agencies had members *ex officio*. The purpose of this network (aside from politics) was to set up a system of checks and balances to prevent centralization of power in the executive branch of the government. This purpose was achieved by and large. We have had no major frauds, no great abuse of executive power. But neither have we had efficiency and economy. We have had instead, much red tape, duplication of services, waste, and often, frustration of the popular will. The Cross Commission recommended the reorganization of the executive branch into eighteen main departments with direct authority and responsibility in the main fields of state government.

However, in 1948, the Connecticut Public Expenditure Council made a survey of state government. They found that, in spite of the recommendations of the Cross Commission, the maze of agencies remained. They listed "108 permanent, appointive boards and commissions, having a total membership of 728, including members *ex officio*. The governor may appoint on his sole responsibility 77 of these boards and commissions having a total membership of 503. The consent of the General Assembly or the Senate is required in his appointments to fifteen other boards and commissions having a total of 84 members. The sixteen other boards and commissions, having a total membership of 131 persons, are appointed by various combinations of authority established by the General Assembly." We still have the red tape, the paper work, the duplication, which make for inefficiency and costly operation. And we have not less government today, but more. New services are being added; present services are being expanded. Costs have reached an all-time high and there is steady pressure for more and more state revenue.

THE FABRIC HAS CHANGED

If we review our history we find that government has expanded steadily as our economy has been industrialized. In 1818, when there were only five agencies in the state government, the people were self-sufficient. They produced their own food and most of their own clothing. Most of the government services they needed were being provided in their own towns. Among the five agencies added to the state government between 1818 and 1850 were the Banking Department, the Department of Education, and the Connecticut State Prison.

The period between 1850 and 1900, when the state agencies increased from ten to 42 and the costs increased tenfold, was a period of rapid industrial development: mills in the North and East, metal industries in the Waterbury area. The rise of corporations, following the passage of the Joint Stock Act in 1837, brought many new demands for government services and government regulations. The rapidly growing urban population necessitated more careful planning of the distribution of food. The Department of Farms and Marketing, the State Agricultural Experiment Station, the Board of Fisheries and Game, the Shell Fisheries Commissions, and the Pure Food and Drug Commission were established to meet this need. The Department of Labor followed industrialization. Welfare problems increased in the new fabric and the Department of Welfare, the Connecticut State Hospital, the Connecticut School for Boys, the Prison Association, and the Board of Education for the Blind were added to the state agencies. In addition the Fine Arts Commission was created and the University of Connecticut was started. It is understandable that costs increased tenfold.

Between 1900 and 1927 industrialization increased and state government continued to expand. Only twenty-seven new agencies were added, but there was a tremendous expansion of existing services. Technological development was rapid during this period. Electricity came into its own and Connecticut took to wheels. The Public Utilities Commission appeared, also the State Water Commission. The Department of Motor Vehicles and the State Police were organized. Health had become a government problem, bringing the Tuberculosis Commission and the State Department of Health. Workers demanded more protection and the Working Men's Compensation Board and the Teachers' Retirement Board were established. There was a tremendous expansion in the wel-

fare field and Norwich State Hospital, Long Lane Farm, Connecticut Farm for Women, Mansfield Training School, and the Connecticut Reformatory were added to the state institutions. As a result there was a startling increase in the cost of the state government, twenty-fold in less than thirty years.

Between 1927 and 1935 most of the increase in the number of agencies was due to the expansion of existing services. The Merritt Parkway Commission and the Highway Safety Commission were added to the Highway Department. Fairfield State Hospital was added to the welfare institutions. The Aeronautics Commission was a new agency and the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment required the appointment of the Liquor Control Commission.

The economic depression of the 30's caused the state government to expand into many new fields. Thousands of Connecticut's citizens were geared to machines. They were helpless when those machines stopped. Relief for the many needy became a government problem. The search for security was on, and the people wanted government guarantees for that security. Public Welfare, Aid to the Aged, Aid to the Blind, Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to the Chronically Ill, better facilities for the mentally ill, have brought great expansion of government services and greatly increased government costs.

Many new agencies have been added in the last ten years. The Department of Finance and Control, the Employee's Retirement Commission, the Unemployment Compensation Commission, the Inter-racial Commission have appeared. The State Housing Authority, the Commission on Alcoholism, the Southbury Training School, and the Public Welfare Council have been created. The state has also assumed a much greater share of the cost of public education at all levels. Expansion of services, plus inflation, brought the cost of state government up to the frightening figure of \$116 millions in 1948.

Urban living, an industrial economy, an interdependent society, these are the reasons for big government. Thus, government expansion is tied definitely to industrial expansion and increased social consciousness, and government costs have mounted steadily with that expansion. In 1948 the state spent one and one-half times what it spent in 1940, three times what it spent in 1930, six times what it spent in 1920, and seventy times what it spent in 1900.

BUT . . . the state highway bill was \$99,000 in 1900, \$5-1/2 millions in 1920, and \$32 millions in 1948. In 1900 the state spent less than one-half million for education, in 1920 \$1-1/4 millions, and in 1948 more than \$11 millions. In 1900 the state expenditures for welfare were only \$672,000, in 1920 about \$3 millions, but in 1948 they were \$32 millions. There are no early figures on personnel, but in 1936 there were less than 6000 state employees while in 1948 there were more than 16,000. Of the total spent in 1948 welfare, education, and highway costs alone amounted to \$75 millions or about 65% of the total budget.

FINANCIALLY SIZE 50 IS TOO LARGE

These figures seem staggering. Taking into consideration the factors of increased population and inflation which account for some of the increased cost, we realize that the per capita cost of Connecticut government is still very high compared to other periods. In 1900 it was \$3.05, in 1920 \$22.05, but in 1947 it was \$79.83.

The two constant factors in this background material are the ever increasing demands for government services and the ever mounting cost of state government. Dr. Stephen K. Bailey, in his treatise, "Basic Principles of Government Administration," says:

We have big government in Connecticut today because in the last hundred years we have come to realize that the very condition of our leading secure and free lives depends increasingly upon the services and protections which government alone is able to provide. It is terribly important that we understand this . . . No administrative reorganization by itself can possibly reduce the present cost of government by more than a fraction of the total. A major reduction in government expenditures can be achieved only by turning the clock back: by eliminating the functions of government which have been created by us to make life richer for ourselves, our families, and our neighbors.

However, the citizen often forgets that he plays a double role in the government picture. As the beneficiary of government he has many wants — good highways, good schools, good welfare services. But as the benefactor, the taxpayer, he objects to increased taxes and heavy spending for government services. Un-

fortunately, most times he is a schizophrenic, a split personality. The beneficiary seldom worries about how the costs are to be met and the taxpayer seldom measures the benefits he receives.

Naturally taxpayers are concerned over government costs. Some fear that, if government costs at all levels continue to rise, taxation and public debt (both of which have a tremendous effect on our economic life) will destroy the private enterprise system⁴. Some fear that heavy taxation will destroy incentives, that men will refuse to increase their productive efforts if they expect that all of their additional earnings for a year will be taken in taxes. Some fear that government aid programs will destroy individual initiative, that people on marginal incomes will not try to supplement those incomes, but will depend on government doles. Some fear that government budgets will be padded, that public officials, not having to produce the wealth, will be wasteful and extravagant in the use of public funds, will buy votes by their disbursement of tax monies.

Since all of us citizens are both beneficiaries and taxpayers to a greater or lesser degree, we should understand that the only way to get maximum state services at minimum tax cost lies in better government organization, strict accountability for public funds, clear lines of authority and responsibility in government patterns.

WHAT KIND OF PATTERN SHOULD WE HAVE?

Quoting Dr. Bailey's "Basic Principles" at length:

If, then, we accept the proposition that in the middle of the 20th Century in the State of Connecticut we need big government to realize our chosen values, the question comes, what kind of big government do we need and do we have a right to expect? . . .

We need and have a right to expect efficient government, responsible government, and (with a small D) democratic government. Furthermore, we have a right to expect these qualities in all branches and at all levels of government: executive, legislative, judicial, local, state, and national; and in the inevitable and necessary relationships which must exist among all of these.

4. Today more than 30% of the national income is taken in federal, state, and local taxes.

Our state constitution has a direct bearing on matters of efficiency, responsibility, and democracy in the conduct of governmental affairs. So have our political parties. Any principles of state administration or any attempts at state reorganization which ignore the constitutional allocations of political power and the role of political parties in the Connecticut governmental pattern are bound to be woefully naive and tragically inadequate.

Efficiency

An efficient governmental administration is one which accomplishes goals with the greatest economy of resources and effort . . . Every human enterprise, large or small, has its inefficiencies. Some of these are due to inadequate personnel, some to faulty organization, some to use of outmoded methods and equipment.

What is particularly involved in governmental inefficiencies, however, is the fact that expanding services demanded by the electorate tend to be added to existing administrative structure of the state government without any real thought being given to the most efficient over-all administrative arrangements. A service is demanded; a new board or agency is established to carry out that new function. Before long the state is up to its ears in boards and agencies, each with a perfectly good reason for existing, but each carried on as a largely autonomous enterprise. The result is an extremely cumbersome administrative pattern. Certainly it is axiomatic that the new Commission on State Organization will look with great care at the present arrangement of boards and agencies in Connecticut to determine what pattern of organization and what housekeeping services would enable them to function with the greatest economy of time, labor, and money . . . We should expect that the carrying out of such recommendations would save the taxpayers' money and insure that for every dollar spent a dollar's worth of service is provided . . . This is reorganization in the generally accepted connotation of the term.

We seem to have little trouble in understanding efficiency in these terms . . . Unfortunately, . . . the major question is whether or not the present system of executive-legislative relations for the accomplishment of high political ideals is effectively and efficiently organized.

It is tragic that we tend to balk at discussing this central issue. We seem to proceed on the strange assumption that our present condition of "government frustration" is beyond our analysis and control. On certain problems of government we have set up a rigid political theology which has the effect of denying the application of modern intelligence to basic questions of efficient political organization.

We inherit from our forefathers, both state and national, a healthy distrust of arbitrary authority. Unfortunately, we also inherit from our forefathers a blind conviction, an outmoded folkway, that the only way to preclude the development of arbitrary authority is to establish and maintain a maze of constitutional and administrative checks, counter checks, and booby traps. At a time when our forebears expected little of their governments the inefficiencies of a doctrinaire pattern of Separation of Powers, Checks, and Balances were not serious . . .

Today in Connecticut we are experiencing in something of a classic way what happens to big government and to grown men and women when they try to function on the theory that progress is made when an irresistible force meets an immovable object. Whatever else the present stalemate is, (in the 1949 session of the General Assembly), it is not efficient government. It means weeks and months and even years of futility, frustration, exhaustingly unproductive effort, and the squandering of public money. Even if the stalemate is broken, the chances are that it is liable to be broken in such a way as to make impossible any rational distinction between political blackmail and honest compromise.

The cure for this major problem of inefficiency in our state government . . . rests in a constitutional revision of the system of representation in the House of Representatives, and in the establishment of a strong two-party system in all parts of our state. The best protection which a democratic people can have against arbitrary authority is a strong and ambitious minority party which continually keeps a weather-eye on the operations of the majority party and its administration and transmits its finding to a free press.

But what we have in Connecticut today is not a responsible two party system in our legislature. Instead of having two teams of horses, one pulling the wagon of state and the other nagging intelligently in the hopes of substituting for those in harness, we have a monstrosity. We have a set of horses attached to one end of the wagon, pulling in one direction, and another set of horses attached to the other end of the wagon, pulling in the opposite direction.

Responsibility

Responsibility is an equally important measure of good government; and by responsibility I mean a system which allows the people of the state to hold public officials and recognizable groups accountable for specific policies and administrative practices . . . If we are to adopt responsibility as a basic principle of government administration of the State of Connecticut, it is elementary that we should try to organize the executive branch into a workable number of major departments and agencies which the governor and his department heads can effectively and flexibly direct.

But . . . the basic reason why we have irresponsibility and lack of true accountability in certain parts of state government in Connecticut is because a number of so-called executive units are in fact managed by officials who are either elected independently under the constitution or who have a tenure of office and an independent authority guaranteed by the legislature . . . Failure to establish clear lines of authority and accountability militates against the type of responsibility which the Hoover Commission has termed, "the first essential step in the search for economy and efficiency."

Through appropriations and through the right of investigation the General Assembly should exercise its rightful and invaluable prerogative of keeping the executive branch on its toes, and the people of the state informed. It should not, however, create and maintain officials and executive agencies and boards irresponsibly removed from both executive and legislative control.

Democracy

Our government should tend to reflect in its policies the interests of the majority of our citizens . . . We have a right to expect that the ingredients of geographical and population-based representation should be so combined as to make increasingly sure that when the inevitable compromises of democratic politics take place, they tend to fall on the side of the majority rather than on the side of the minority will.

In the lower house of the General Assembly, however, the units of geographical representation are so small and frequently so homogeneous that a representative feels himself responsible only to a single narrow interest. That narrow interest, when multiplied by the number of similar constituencies represented in the lower house, means that democratic compromises in policy-making tend to fall increasingly on the side of the numerical minority of our population, which can use the blackmail threat of complete deadlock unless the majority submits to its position.

Finally, democratic government means the maximization of citizen participation in governmental affairs and in the political process.

Dr. Bailey has pointed up the fact that we citizens have a right to expect efficiency, responsibility, and democracy in our government pattern. The background material presented earlier shows that these essentials are largely lacking in Connecticut's pattern of government. We can see that government in the State of Connecticut is vastly different today in size and in the scope of its services, that the pattern of 1818 is no longer suited to a highly industrialized state with a largely urban population. Surely there should be little opposition to organizing the state government so that it can operate with maximum efficiency at minimum cost.

SHOULD POLITICAL POWER, PRESTIGE, AND PATRONAGE CONTROL THE FIGURE?

But there is much in the operation of government which defies logic. There is Political Power. There are Pressure Groups. There is Prestige. There is Patronage. These are big nouns in the vocabulary of government. These are the nouns of the politi-

cal parties, and, after all, it is through political parties that our government operates. Because of the difficult process of amending the constitution, major reforms never come unless the whole electorate demands reform. A bill for a constitutional amendment must originate in the House of Representatives and must pass that session of the lower house by a simple majority vote. It must be submitted to both houses in the next session when it must pass by a two-thirds vote of each house. Then it must be submitted to the people for ratification. Constitutional reform has never been achieved on a party basis. It has been accomplished only when the general public, without respect to party affiliation, has demanded change.

If we are to make any changes in our pattern of government we need to have some knowledge of the how and why of political parties and their special significance in this problem. Unless we have the techniques with which to bring pressure to bear on our parties the work of the Commission on the Organization of State Government, which is costing the taxpayers \$100,000, may bring little change in Connecticut's pattern of government.

Peter B. Odegard and E. Allen Helms in their book, "American Politics, A Study in Political Dynamics," say:

Politics involves the translation of social pressure into public policies. This is done mainly through the agency of political parties and pressure groups. The difference between party politics and pressure politics is chiefly one of scope and emphasis. Political parties are mainly, though not exclusively, concerned with who shall exercise power . . . Pressure groups, on the other hand, are mainly concerned with how power shall be exercised. They (pressure groups) are, in a word, more concerned with policy, i.e., the apportionment of rights and privileges, than with personnel. They rarely put forth candidates of their own, but throw their support to friendly candidates of political parties, just as they exert pressure within the party to control the organization and to influence partisan declarations of policy. Party platforms reflect the interplay of these group pressures, and are designed to appeal to a wide public, made up of miscellaneous interests. They represent more or less comprehensive, and by the same token, vague programs of government action . . . Political parties are primarily electoral devices to which matters of policy are incidental and sec-

ondary; in the case of pressure groups the order of importance is reversed. Consequently, we may say that American Party politics, so far at least as the major parties are concerned, is the job of personnel politics; pressure politics, including that of minority parties, is policy politics. Any realistic study of the process of government must take into account both . . .

Under the two party system . . . whatever special interests may exist in the party do not, as a rule, appear on the surface. Generally their bond of unity is the simple desire for power and the spoils of office. With minor exceptions political parties represent aggregations of special interest groups, of which the party machine or organization is one. It is concerned less with matters of public policy than with personnel . . . To secure control of public jobs and the power that goes with them is its sole *raison d'être*. But to consummate this end the machine must garner votes, and in the process it encounters conflicting claims of rival interests. Hence, the life of the party becomes one of perpetual compromise, out of which are generated its so-called principles, which in the very nature of things must be vague and indefinite. For the substance of these principles the "organizations," as such, care little, so long as they achieve the final goal of all party machines, victory at the polls.

In simpler terms, political parties have one main goal—to win elections. Since their platforms are broad and seldom contain vital issues, they have to depend on highly integrated organizations to get out the vote and to win elections. These organizations are knitted together by Power, Prestige, and Patronage. Power in business circles means votes. Power in labor groups means votes. Patronage also means votes. Patronage has many forms: jobs within the party, jobs in government, contracts in both business and government, land to be bought, land to be sold, control over natural resources.

Party machines, in most cases, do not like alterations in the patterns of government. They do not want changes which will lessen their power, or will decrease the patronage they can dispense. Their resistance to change on these grounds is understandable because it is so human. However, they have an Achilles heel—votes.

We should understand, too, something of party organization. To quote again from American Politics:

A well organized political machine resembles the hierarchy of church or army. Within the precincts are the local leaders and their workers, above them the leaders and workers in the wards, counties, and assembly districts, culminating in the state committee whose chairman is frequently, though not always, the state boss. Responsibility is, as in the army, from the bottom up, and authority from the top down . . . The very existence of the machine depends on internal discipline . . . One of the striking qualities of professional politicians is loyalty . . . Nor is this loyalty confined to the party underlings. It is equally true of the state and national leaders . . . Party loyalty is reinforced by an elaborate system of rewards and punishments. If the organization is described as the steel framework which holds together the myriad interest groups which compose the party following, jobs and favors of many kinds may be said to be the rivets which hold the framework together. From the national committee down to the precincts the machine is held together by patronage.

An understanding of party loyalty and party organization should give us some sympathy for our legislators. We should not be too harshly critical of their voting the party line on all issues. We have no way of knowing what fight they made against the party stand in caucus because legislative caucus sessions are never open to the public. We should realize that politicians want to stay in office, and that punishment may be swift and ruthless for the man who has the courage to stand out against his party. He can do so only when he has great personal prestige and a large personal following.

POLITICS IN CONNECTICUT'S PATTERN

With these facts in mind let us look again at government reorganization in our state. Politics, Prestige, and Patronage play a large part in Connecticut's particular pattern of government. Party organizations stand to lose much strength if major changes are made in that pattern. The General Assembly exerts more power than do the legislative bodies in many states.

In the U.S. Congress and in many states a two-thirds vote is needed to over-ride the governor's veto. But in Connecticut only a simply majority vote is needed. Thus a governor cannot possibly put his program into operation unless he has a majority of both houses of the legislature supporting him.

All local government in Connecticut is open to the control of the General Assembly. In many states towns are incorporated under state laws which give them almost complete jurisdiction over their local government patterns. But in Connecticut, towns remain very much the creatures of the state. The General Statutes provide a general pattern for town government and certain enabling acts permit towns to make minor changes in their structure. But many demands for change must be approved by the General Assembly. Towns and cities can get charters from the legislature, but they⁵ cannot make charter changes without the approval of the state legislature. With this limited home rule and with the present system of representation in the lower house, the members have as their first concern legislation wanted in their own constituencies. Bargaining over town issues becomes a state issue, and log-rolling over local bills results. Political control in the legislature means tremendous power over local government in Connecticut.

The General Assembly has a stranglehold on county government. County officials are elected directly by the people in every other state except Rhode Island. In Connecticut, county commissioners are elected by the legislature upon the recommendation of a caucus of senators and representatives from each county.

The General Assembly has tremendous power over courts. All superior court appointments must have the approval of that body. But it is in the minor courts that patronage really has prominence. In 1818, when the Constitution was adopted, minor courts were minor, indeed, and they were not fitted into the government pattern at all. Until 1949 all minor court appointments, judgeships and associate judgeships, were made by the General Assembly with the approval of the governor. The power to make these appointments was assumed by the General Assembly as a power not specifically denied it and not otherwise delegated. Here was Power, Politics, and Patronage on a grand scale. The judgeships have been a major item in political manoeuvring in the legis-

5. The Hartford City Charter, as now written, is an exception to this statement.

lature for many years, especially when the governor and the senate were of a different party from the lower house.

In 1947 an amendment was adopted which changed the method of the appointment of minor court judges. Henceforth, the governor was to appoint the judges with the approval of the General Assembly. The amendment was to be implemented by a statute defining the length of terms which had been two years under the old statute. The judgeships remained very much in politics under the new amendment. The Governor asked for a six-year term for the judges. The General Assembly refused to pass a statute defining the length of terms. The Governor sent his recommendations for judgeships to the General Assembly just two hours before the Senate was adjourned. But adjournment came before the recommendations were approved. Whereupon the Governor made interim appointments. These, of course, were contested, and the Supreme Court ruled that the interim appointments should stand. Political juggling over judgeships has continued this year. There were many intra-party fights for the plums. So the judgeships are still a major concern of the General Assembly. The citizen gets the impression that the power and patronage involved in these appointments are of much greater importance to the legislators than are state issues like welfare and education.

In addition, the Connecticut pattern of government permits dual office-holding. Many members of the General Assembly hold other public offices—local, county, and state. Some legislators come to the legislature in order to get government appointments, and they are more concerned with patronage than they are with legislation. Sixteen of the twenty-three Democratic Senators in the 1949 session were appointed to other government offices. Here again is government pattern in need of change. If legislators could not appoint themselves to office, or if they could not hold two public offices at the same time, machine politics and patronage might not be so prominent in Connecticut's government.

Connecticut's pattern of government then is a paradise for machine politicians because it furnishes so many "rivets to hold their machines together." The politicians like the pattern, too, because it is always easy to "blame the failures on the other side." Because of the divided responsibility and the weak executive veto, a candidate for governor can make beautiful campaign promises, and he can always explain his failure to carry out his promises by

saying that the General Assembly refused to let him put his program into operation.

REPRESENTATION AND THE PATTERN

The system of representation in the lower house is such that it has been controlled by the Republican Party continuously since 1861 (except for a two-year period when there was a split in the Republican Party). The towns are the units of representation and the small towns of the state are the Republican strongholds. The case for this system of representation cannot be argued on any basis of logic. It is not even true representation on a town basis. Towns of unequal size have the same representation, since all towns established before 1818 have two representatives. Union with a population of 280 has the same representation as Hartford, a city of 185,000. Towns established since 1818 with a population of less than 5000 have only one representative, but their older sister towns of the same size have two. Towns of 4900 population can gain extra representation by adding just 100 inhabitants, but cities, regardless of how much they increase in size, can never have more than two representatives.

The lower house with 272 members is unwieldy in size. It is also controlled definitely by a minority of the electorate. The 95 smallest towns elect a majority of the membership. They represent just 9-1/2 per cent of the population. Since 50% of Connecticut's population is urban, it is apparent that urban problems are subservient to those of the small towns. This is true on questions of tax policy, highways, and aid to education. The cities which furnish a large share of state revenue do not get a fair share of state grants.

By law the Senate should be redistricted every ten years, following the federal census. The last redistricting in Connecticut was in 1903. There are 36 senatorial districts, but they are definitely unbalanced in size if population is to be the basis of representation in the Senate. 35% of the population elects one-half of the Senate. Districts vary in size from 25,000 to 114,000. Responsibility for redistricting lies with the General Assembly, but they choose to ignore this responsibility session after session.

The problem of a fair balance in representation runs like a thread through all of Connecticut's political history. The following chart shows the change in the population pattern of the state:

Connecticut Towns

Date	Number	Over 5000	Over 20,000	Over 50,00	Over 100,000
1639	3	None	None	None	None
1662	17	"	"	"	"
1818	120	3	"	"	"
1850	147	11	1	"	"
1900	168	32	7	4	1
1940	169	51	15	6	4

DEFENSE OF THE PATTERN

Advocates of Connecticut's existing pattern of government argue that the basis of representation in the lower house with the towns as the unit, parallels that of the United States Senate. Each state, regardless of its population or area, has two senators. However, the U. S. Senators must represent all elements of the population because each state has both urban and rural interests. The Connecticut town unit is so small and homogeneous that frequently the representative tends to reflect only the interests of his own constituency.

Advocates of this pattern also point out that balance is achieved between urban and rural interests in the composition of the two houses. The House of Representatives in 1949 was 65% Republican and the Senate was 64% Democratic. Thus, out of the compromises which must come if legislation is passed, the city interests, predominant in the senate, get the same consideration as the rural interests, predominant in the house. The distribution of state aid both for highways and education seems to refute this argument. The city of Waterbury which contributes more than a million dollars in highway taxes receives only \$26,000 in state highway grants, while the town of Canaan which pays only about \$6000 also receives \$26,000 in highway funds.

The advocates argue also that under this system of representation the state has had an enviable record of clean government, sound financing, and steady progress. The representatives, through

the years, have been men of high calibre and integrity. They point out that many fine men who have served in the legislature under the existing system of representation would never have entered politics, if they had had to enter via big-city political machines. These men are solid citizens, property owners, independent thinkers who refuse to be bossed by political machines.

The Constitution of Connecticut is considered a good constitution because it is a skeleton framework, a simple pattern of government which must be implemented by statute. The simplicity of the document makes Connecticut government adaptable through statutes to changing needs and conditions. Statutes can be changed in any session of the General Assembly, whereas powers granted under the Constitution cannot easily be revoked. The advocates of the pattern argue that Connecticut government is a government of laws and not of men, that with the legislature predominant over other branches of the government the people through their elected representatives are always in control. However, with the divided responsibility which results from this pattern the people lose their control.

It is true that many changes in Connecticut's pattern of government could be made without constitutional amendments. Reorganization in the executive branch can be achieved to some degree by statutory revision. The mass of appointments to the network of agencies can be reduced. The duplication and red tape can be eliminated. However, clear lines of authority and responsibility can be established only when department heads are responsible directly to the governor.

PARTY MACHINES LIKE THE OLD DESIGN

The legislature has the power to make changes in pattern. The question then becomes one of political theory and party patronage. Is the network of bureaus and commissions necessary to maintain control over the executive branch of the government, or is it a political device to force control by a system of patronage? Is it necessary for the state legislature to be concerned with the specifics of government in the towns, or do the political parties cling to the system because they can more easily control local party organization? Do the people really control now? Can they place responsibility for the operation of the state government on the governor? On the legislature?

Machine politicians are not often interested in reform, as such. They are interested, as pointed out above, in who does it, not how it is done. They like the mass of appointments in the executive branch of the government, "the rivets which hold the party framework together." They prefer a system in which it is "easy to blame the failures on the other side." They like authority when they are in control of the executive branch but they prefer the checks and balances for the times when they are not in control. They never like "strict accountability." Since winning political battles is the goal of political parties naturally the Republican Party is not interested in changing the system of representation in the lower house if they can always control that body under the present system. Neither party is anxious to redistrict the senate because both parties stand to lose as well as gain seats in a reapportionment. In addition, redistricting also means upsetting their hierarchies, disturbing their patterns of party organization within their districts.

But, to quote again from "American Politics":

Before we condemn the politicians it is well to bear in mind that . . . machine politics . . . is as much an effect as it is a cause of corruption and special privilege in American life . . . There is an old aphorism which says that "every people gets the kind of government it deserves." Most Americans are in favor of honest, impartial government in the abstract. Enthusiasm for this principle, however, wanes when applied to concrete situations where particular interests are, or would seem to be, adversely affected. This fact, no less than inertia and indifference, helps to explain the difficulty in making necessary alterations in familiar long established institutions.

ALTERATIONS ARE THE CITIZEN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Connecticut's pattern of government will be modernized only if most Connecticut citizens are in favor of impartial and efficient government "in the concrete." The parties have to respond when the public demands change. Issues of vital importance to the electorate involve votes. The public has the votes and votes are what the parties want. The citizens must become strong and vocal pressure groups within the parties if change is to come.

We, the citizens, must know the facts. We must understand our present pattern of government. We must learn where that

pattern does not fit our needs. Most of all we must apply pressure for state reorganization in our own parties in our own towns.

This is no easy task. We must earn our way into the councils of the political parties. We must volunteer to do the menial tasks of party work, to ring door bells, to get people to register as voters, and to join our party caucuses. We must contact the members of our town committees and inform them that we want our party to support reorganization.

The power to alter Connecticut's pattern of government is granted to the citizens by the Constitution of Connecticut. Article 2, Section II, clearly states:

We declare that all political power is inherent in the people, and that all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit; and that they have at all times an undeniable right to alter their forms of government in such manner as they may think expedient.

We must not let inertia and indifference prevent us from exercising our power.

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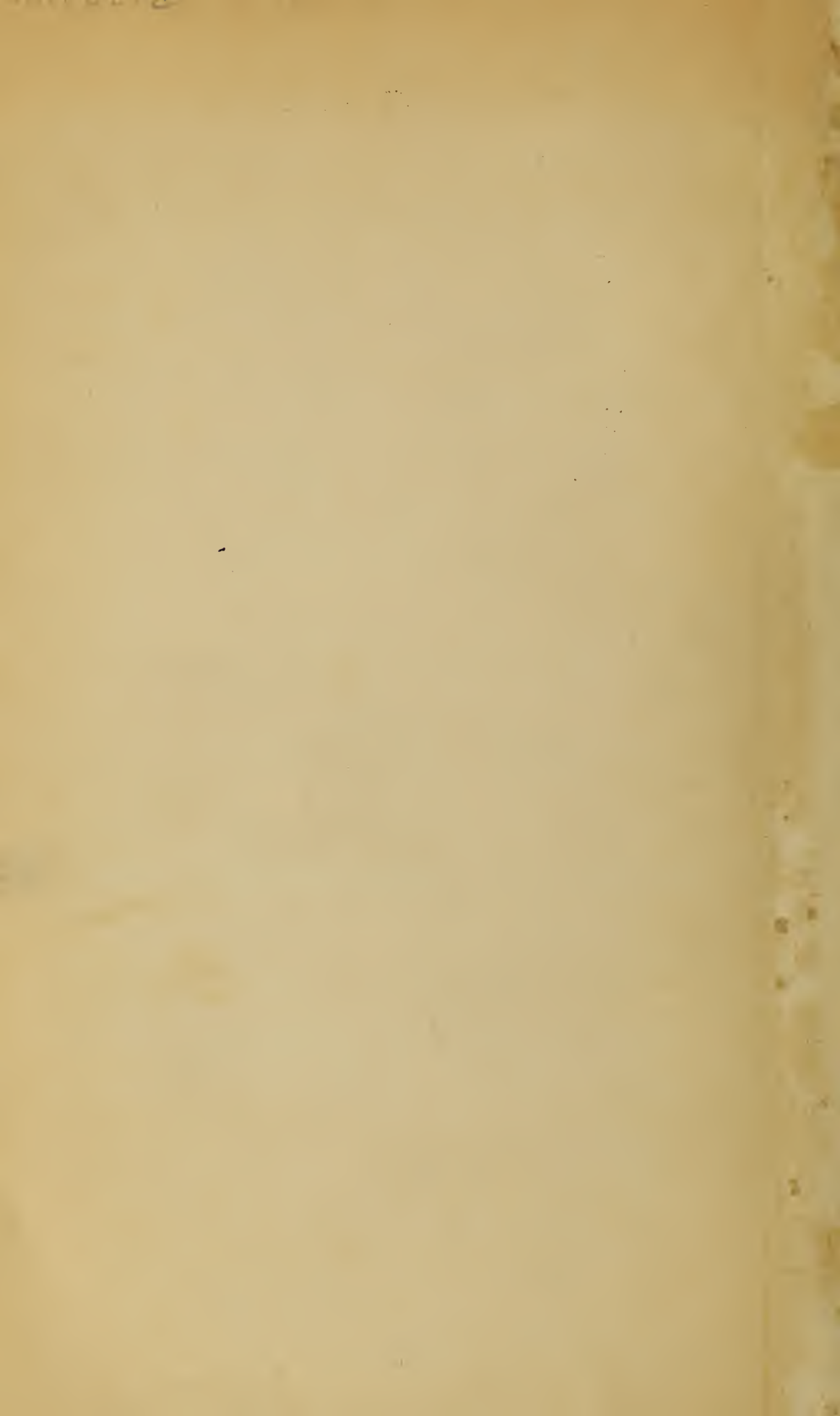
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